Claim(s)

1.   A method for managing the changing of a network infrastructure, comprising:

creating a change plan that comprises instructions about how a change is to be

performed;

5   associating said change plan with one of a plurality of change categories;

providing said change plan to affected entities for approval; and

implementing said change plan after approval has been provided by the affected

entities;

wherein said responsible entities are selected based on, and said change plan is

10   approved in accordance with, rules related to each of said change categories into which

said change plan was associated.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said affected entities are unknown to at least one other entity involved in said method.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said change plan is part of a change ticket.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said change plan is accessible by a work-flow engine.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said work-flow engine is implemented through use of a computer system.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said affected entities comprise one of a customer, a duty manager, a change coordinator, a change approver, and an operations center.

7. The method of claim 1 whereby said change categories include one of scheduled change, unscheduled change, and event response.

8. A system for managing the changing of a network infrastructure, comprising:

    a work-flow engine;

    a change ticket comprising a change plan including instructions about how a change is to be performed, said change ticket being present in a form that can be

5 used by said work-flow engine; and

    responsible entities connected to said work-flow engine whose approval is required before said change plan can be implemented;

    Wherein, said change plan is organized into one of a plurality of change categories based on the nature of said change, and said work-flow engine provides said change plan

10 to said responsible entities for approval.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein said work-flow engine comprises a computer system.

10. A method for managing the changing a network infrastructure, comprising

a change author having the duties of proposing a proposed change and authoring a change ticket;

a change sponsor having the duties of seeking all necessary approval for said

5 proposed change;

a change coordinator who has the duties of coordinating and carrying out the proposed change and;

an operations center who has the duties related to the monitoring of said network;

wherein said change author authors said change ticket to include a change plan for

10 implementing said proposed change, said change ticket being passed to said change sponsor when said change author has completed all their said duties said change sponsor passing said change ticket to said change coordinator when said change sponsor has completed all their said duties and said change coordinator passing on said change ticket to said operations center when said change coordinator has completed all their said duties,

15 said operations center being responsible for closing said change ticket.

11. The method of claim 10 whereby said change ticket is a computer construct which can be passed through electronic means.

12. A means for managing the changing of the infrastructure of a network comprising:

authoring means for creating a change plan that comprises instructions about how a change is to be performed;

change matrix means for associating said change with one of a plurality of change

5   categories;

communication means for providing said change plan to affected entities for

approval; and

agent means for implementing said change plan after said approval has been

provided;

10   Whereby said responsible entities are selected based on, and said change plan is

approved in accordance with, rules related to said change category into which said change

was associated.